

News Release

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For Immediate Release

Global Geoparks Conference gains UNESCO support

The 7th International Conference on Global Geoparks 2016, being held in Torquay on the English Riviera, has been granted the patronage of UNESCO by their Director-General, Irina Bokova in Paris.

Being held in Great Britain for the first time, the conference will welcome delegates concerned with the Global Geoparks agenda from all over the world. Geoparks work to develop sustainable economies, eco-tourism and engagement with their local communities, as well as being areas of significant geological interest.

Nick Powe, Chair of the conference project board said: "There are currently one hundred and eleven Geoparks in thirty two countries worldwide, and we're very excited to be welcoming colleagues to the English Riviera, the first urban area ever to be granted the status of Global Geopark. The conference will be worth over £1.4million in visitor spend to our local economy, as well as shining a spotlight on our work to engage local communities and make the most of our natural heritage."

His Excellency Mr. Matthew Sudders, UK Ambassador to UNESCO said: "The Global Geoparks conference provides an international platform to support efforts to conserve Earth's heritage while sustaining local communities and promoting science education. We are pleased to welcome this high profile event to Great Britain for the first time. It is a recognition of the excellent work of the UK in this field that we were chosen to host the Conference."

Tim Williams, Chair of the UK National Commission for UNESCO said, "The National Commission is pleased to be associated with this conference. As well as being an opportunity to showcase the UK's rich geological heritage to a global audience, the International Conference will be a valuable occasion for the UK's Global Geoparks to both share best practice and bring new ways of working and learning to the UK to more effectively promote eco-tourism and sustainable development."

The conference will be held at the Riviera International Conference Centre, 27 – 30th September 2016. For more information or to register interest in attendance, sponsorship or volunteering opportunities please visit www.geoparks2016.com and @ERGG2016 on twitter.

Editor Notes:

The English Riviera Global Geopark successfully bid for the 7th International Conference on Global Geoparks with the support of Torbay Council, Torbay Development Agency, Plymouth University, Exeter University, The Geological Society, British Geological Survey, English Geodiversity Forum, Natural England, Arts Council England, Natural History Museum and Flybe.

The conference takes place every two years and has previously been staged in China (2004) Northern Ireland (2006) Germany (2008) Malaysia (2010) Japan (2012) and Canada (2014.) 2016 will be the first occasion that the conference takes place in Great Britain.

There are seven Global Geoparks in the UK, out of a total UNESCO network of one hundred and eleven in thirty two countries. A Geopark is concerned with conservation of natural heritage, sustainable economic development, promotion of science education and community engagement.

About UNESCO and the UK National Commission for UNESCO (UKNC)
The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) aims to enhance peace, security and sustainable development by fostering international collaboration through its work in education, science, culture, communication and information.

The UK National Commission (UKNC) works to support the UK's contribution to UNESCO and bring the benefits of UNESCO to the UK.

The UKNC has three core priorities:

- To provide independent policy advice to devolved and central government on UNESCO related issues
- To support the UK government's agenda in helping UNESCO to become more institutionally effective
- To help UK individuals and institutions to access UNESCO resources and accreditations

In carrying out these roles, the UKNC relies on advice and support of its expert network, including specialists in the fields of education, culture, the sciences and communication and information from across the UK.

Relevant links:

<http://www.unesco.org.uk/>
www.ergg2016.com

www.englishrivierageopark.org.uk

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